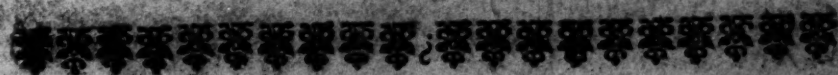




THE  
COMPENDIOUS HISTORY  
OF  
GEORGE the Farmer.



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THE

COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY



GEORGE III.

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*Summibus Johanne Hughes 1732*  
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THE  
COMPENDIOUS HISTORY  
OF  
**GEORGE the Farmer:**

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WHEREIN

The Memorable Story of the *Horns*,  
and other Conceits, are duly Consider'd.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. MOOR, near St. Pauls, 1715.

Price 3 d.



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COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY  
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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. Moore, near St. Pauls, 1717.

Price 3s.



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THE  
COMPENDIOUS HISTORY  
OF

*George the Farmer, &c.*

**T**HAT Men of inferiour Denominations, may sometimes be possess'd of the highest Virtues, and most eminent Qualifications, is no way disputable, and therefore unnecessary to be proved. These Things render a Man considerable in the World, when all other temporal Acquisitions, in a Person unadorn'd with those Embellishments, may live in the profound security of being little talk'd of.

This *George*, frequently call'd *George the Farmer*, was born to considerable Lands and Livings of his own, and of a Family very well known in the *North*. He had besides very large Flocks and Herds, and was eminent for a very just, tho' frugal way of

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Dealing; and had a general Respect throughout his whole Country.

George had likewise very Rich Relations in the West, and as we have an *English* Proverb, which says, *'Tis good to be of Kin to an Estate*; Time so disposed the Succession, as that he became the next Protestant Heir to a very considerable One, within a single Life that then held the Possession. It is very well known, that we have indisputed Laws against Papists succeeding to the Estates of Protestants; so that I shall not need to say more on that Head.

Not only the present *Incumbent*, but the whole Mannour were in fear of a Popish Landlord, that they concurr'd in strengthening the Entail by all the Methods that could be thought of.

It hapned however, in process of time, that the *Incumbent*, being incens'd by some People of wicked Inventions, That the Laws of Nature were very binding, and tho' it were true, that the Force as well as the Reason of Temporal Laws, were sometimes to be regarded, yet the ties of Blood, and other pious Considerations, were Things which ought more absolutely to sway Us: Inferring farther, That 'twas no great Sin to keep another out of an Estate, when it was with Design to restore it as soon as a proper opportunity presented. But where it was with intent to defraud the TRUE HEIR, and Convey the Possession to a third Person,



*Person, that was an absolute and inexcusable Sin.*

With these, and other the like prevailing Insinuations, they had work'd Matters to such a height, as had greatly intimidated the Possessor; insomuch that He began to think there would be no room for him in Heaven, if he did not endeavour to restore the Possession, at least to secure it after his Death, to the next Lineal Heir, who was, barring the difference in Religion, of much nearer Kin than *George* on whom the Estate was settled. Poor Man, they had work'd him to such a Fit of *Maudlin*, that he gave into their Hands the Power of doing all that should be necessary to so good and pious a Work; himself retiring to his Closet, to bewail the Interdiction he was perswaded he lay in from Heaven, in respect to the Possession he kept of the Estate; but much more in having a Hand in, and consenting to, the Conveyance of it to another, who had a much less Right than himself in the way of Lineage.

It is too long to repeat all the proceedings that attended this Affair; but those who have Wrote with most certainty of those Times, plainly make it appear, that every thing was near ripe, to have effaced the Records, and made a new act of *Settlement*, (wherein whether the *Incumbent* should have continued in Possession to his Death or no is not certain) when to make short of the Story, the *Incumbent* dropt off. B 2 Here



Here was a Crisis of Affairs, very well worth Observing; Those who were curious in Inspection were attentive which way Things would turn. *George* had immediate Notice from his Friends, who invited him to come and take Possession of the Estate; whilst the *Hereditary* Men were in such Confusion on the Death of the late *Incumbent*, and struck with such a Panick Terror, that they had not Power to make the least Attempt in favour of their designed *Successour*; and therefore to a Man almost run in to the other side, each striving to shew himself most forward, and to make a Merit of shewing the greatest and most sincere proofs of Friendship and Respect to Him, who but some few Days before they had been labouring as earnestly to disappoint in the Succession.

But certainly nothing was more Comical, or could be the subject of a better Jest, than to hear the mighty splutter they made of being the only Men who had a Friendship for him; and if the sole Credit of it was not ascribed to them, they became very petulant and angry; and on the same grounds expected that the chief Favour and Management of all, would be continu'd to them.

They clap'd their Wings and Crow'd prodigiously at the Expectation of these Things, and were, as we may say, *Cock a hoop* upon the matter. *George*, who was of a tenacious, wise Temper, gave them no occasion, for

for the present, to think they had less Interest than they imagined; but no sooner was he got into possession, than he began to shew he knew his Friends from his Foes: In fine he cleared the Mannour of them all, one after another, and let them see, that he was too well acquainted with their Dissimulation to give them any farther Credit or Rule there.

We may consider how Men naturally Chollerick and Vindictive would receive this: They could not say with the Vulgar Proverb, *That their Love was turn'd into Hatred*, for they never had any; but this Fagot clapt to their A——s, soon changed their Note, and they could not help shewing that a secret Aversion had lurk'd under all their specious Pretences of Friendship. They now opposed him with all their might and main, and made one home struggle to have thrown him out of the Possession, or at least to have made him sensible, that their Power was such, that he should hold it no longer, than he was guided by them.

They drew over the Vicar and two of his Curates to make an out cry among the People, and draw off the Rabble, for the Priests and the Mob naturally hang together. They gave out a hundred false Reports to blast his Reputation, and represented him in the most odious Colours possible. They Painted him as Black as *Lucifer*, put a Great pair of Horns on his Head; with



with a Tail fifty Foot long, so that he wanted nothing but a Cloven Foot, to make him as meer a Devil as ever was Limn'd by *Michael Angelo*; and thus presented him to the view of the People on whom it wrought very terrible Impressions.

Sometimes they delineated him with a Head like a *Dragon*, swallowing down a *Church*, *Steeple* and all; from which Hieroglyphick, they took occasion to represent to the People his being bred a Schismatick; and that having Gorg'd the Church, his Stomach had that strange Virtue, to convert it into a Conventicle. A Hundred such odd Chimera's they made use of to render him odious to the People; who, out of a hair-brain'd Zeal for their Religion, suck'd in all the Poison that the *Hereditary Tribe* administred to them; and in prejudice to their own real Good, would listen to no Perswasions, no Remedies that were like to effect their Cure.

They began to put up their Prayers for Deliverance; crying, O Lord! what manner of Man hast thou set over Us? We shall all be destroyed, they say he eats live Children; our Substance will be devour'd; our Apples and Cream turn'd into sour Milk; and our dear dear Church, that we love as we do our Lives, notwithstanding we never come near it, swallow'd up before our Faces: Are these the Blessings we were to find? Now Heaven send us our old Land-lord



lord again. Ah what a merry Life we led in his Days, and triumph'd over the Popish Presbyterian Curs; but now poor Church thou art like to go down, and the Barn to flourish: Yes, yes, our Sins are ripe for Vengeance.

George, all this time, could not but smile to see the Ignorance of the People, who tho' they saw him daily go to Church, yet were so wilfully blind that they would not trust their Eyes; but swore positively that he was at the Conventicle, and it was very much that they paid him the due Civilities as they passed by him.

To cherish this Spirit in the Rabble, it was insinuated, that truly, their *Hereditary Landlord*, (tho' he was brought up by the Parish, and the Charity of an old Uncle, and no proof remaining of his Legitimacy, most People presuming him to be only the spurious By-blow of a former Lord of the Mannour) might soon be as good a Churchman as George; for the Ceremonies of one differ'd as little from the Church as the other; That the one was a Town-born Child, and that the other came out of the North, and spoke nothing but *Yorkshire*. And this was insinuated so cunningly, that some began to cry, it was pity it had not been thought on sooner: Nay, 'twas affirm'd that he had brought such a multitude of Strangers with him, as would soon impoverish the Country, and eat up the fat of the Land.

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At other times they gave out, that he went up and down invisibly ; that he went at Noon day, by a Hundred People to *Mother Haggy's* to drink Tea, and has return'd again thro' a Crowd of Spectators in open Market without ever being perceiv'd. What Business he could have at *Mother Haggy's*, was the Subject of further Speculation : 'Twas given out that he came there to have his Nativity Calculated, and to enquire into future Events; and then to Eves-drop what the *Market-Folks* said of him.

Sometimes they said they have seen him at his Window eating Fire ; and that he had by his Art of Conjuring rais'd the last Grand Eclipse. And among the rest of these prodigious Stories, they had one exceeded all, which if true, was a Miracle that may sufficiently raise his Reputation ; viz. That he wou'd feed all his whole Family, upwards of Fourty in Number, with five Half-penny Rolls, and two Trotters, and there should remain Half-a-dozen Baskets of Fragments. George would have made an excellent Purveyor of an Army, to have fed the hungry Troops by Contract, and have ruined more Jews than the Inquisition.

The Country People took most of these Stories for truth, and it was in the next Age made the Subject of a *Bartholomew Droll*, called *The Pleasant History of George the Farmer, with the Pleasant Humours of his Mam Gobling*.

The



But to pursue my Story : *George*, as soon as he was well settled in the Mannour, Proclaimed a publick Wake, according to the Custom of the Country : Good Chear was provided ; and the Lads and the Lasses made themselves as Gay as possible to celebrate the Day. There were Fiddles, Dancing, Stool-Ball play, Wrestling, Cudgelling, and other Rural Pastimes ; in which the Honest and most Innocent sort appeared greatly pleased , and contributed many merry Conceits of their own, to shew their Love to their new Landlord. But whilst they were thus innocently and chearfully diverting themselves on a Day set a part for the same, some of the Envious and Scabby Tribe got together, resolving to spoil their Mirth, which was performed in Honour of one, who they had no respect for.

In some Places they broke the Fiddles and Bag-pipes, insulted the Girls and spoil'd their Dancing. In other Places they broke the Wrestling-Ring, and threw dead Cats among the harmless Country People, to the great damage of their *Sunday* Cloaths. Here they hung out spiteful Pictures tending to expose their new Lord, which they never failed to adorn with some Device of Horns ; for the nearer they represented him to a Devil, the more they gained their point with the People whom they endeavour'd



vour'd to possess with all the frightful Notions possible against him. In some Places, and even in the Parish Church belonging to the Mannour, the Vicar secured the Keys of the Belfrey, to prevent the young Mens shewing their Affection by Ringing; and one called *Bungy* stood at the Church-yard Stile, and told the People, That it was a Day of Sorrow and Humiliation, rather than of Mirth and Pastime, and advised them all to go home, and Meditate on the Judgment that threatned them; and not waste the Day in Jubilee: For remember, says he, that one of our former Lords, who was a dear Friend to the Church, and hated Schismatics, fell from his Horse, and broke his Neck on a piece of Timber that lay in the Way; and with such like Cant continued to hold the People in Discourse till he was out of Breath.

In other Places they were so Rude, That they broke Windows, ranfack'd Houses, and committed Murder; and all this passed with impunity. The deluded People in many Places catch'd the Distemper, and entertained ill Thoughts of honest *George*; which being Weekly improved by the Vicar and his Curates, no wonder if the People fell off in their Respect to him; but as all was founded on *Falsities and Absurdities*, so it was not like to last long.

The

The People had by this time imbibed such strange Notions, that there needed no Reason or Arguments to perswade them into a Belief of any Thing of this kind, so great a force has Prejudice upon the Mind: Nor did the *Hereditary Party* lose any opportunity to make advantage of the Peoples Ignorance. They had hitherto had pretty good success, and had rouz'd the Bent of the People to a rare pitch. But there was one Thing yet undone to touch the People to the quick, and that was by insinuating to them, that their Copy-holds and Leases were in Danger; That they would be obliged to give six years Purchase for renewing the one, and instead of a Pepper-corn a year for the other, compelled to pay six Shillings in the Pound out of the annual stated Rent; and that a general *Court-Leet* of the Inhabitants would speedily be called, to fix this and other Grievances on them, if they did not endeavour to prevent it, by Voting for such as were Friends to the late Possessor, and the Church.

You will believe it was not the Business of these Men to Accuse themselves; nor would the People Credit it from any body else; tho' it had been apparently enough manifested to them, how They had practis'd on the Weakness of the late *Incumbent*, not only in the waste and havock which had



been made of the Estate, by Felling the Timber, and Mortgaging the Rents for great Sums of Money. It was no matter if they had confounded the whole Estate, so they had but left the Church standing; as long as they were pretended Friends to that, the Rabble were sure to cry up their Virtues.

But Truth is like the Sun, and will force its way through the narrowest Recesses, as soon as those Clouds are dispell'd which naturally obscure it. The true Reason of raising these Clamours, was no other than a design to allarm the *Village* with a sense of growing Dangers; that they should not be at leisure to look back, and espy the Rogueries that had been acted under the late Possessor.

George was a little busie all this while, getting in his Harvest, and need there was of it; for he found nothing at his coming but empty Barns and thin Granaries, together with a great waste of Timber; the Inclosures run to Rack and Ruin, and many Tenements ready to fall to the Ground for want of Repairs: And when it was talk'd of Enquiring strictly into these Things, They bid defiance to the Law, and talk'd with such an Air of Arrogance, that very few almost suspected they were Guilty.

But



But George, with the Assistance of the honest *Hinds* and *Villagers*, having now near Conquer'd his Harvest Work, gave orders to his *Steward* to call a *Court-Leet*, as well to set the Affairs of the *Mannour* to Rights, as to enquire into the Rogueries that had been lately acted. It is remarkable what a bustle these Men made to obstruct this; how they went round the Tenants Houses, from Door to Door, and insinuated, *That now or never, was the time to stand up for their Liberties and the Church; if they did not themselves, adieu to their Religion at least.* Some they cajoled by fair Speeches; and others influenc'd with Menaces. No Arts were unessay'd to draw away the Rabble; and indeed they had so far effect, that it set them in many Places to Curse their Landlord *George*, and say most spiteful Things of him: But the most serious and better sort were scandalized at these Proceedings; for in truth they knew no reason for all these Clamours; nor had he done any Thing since His coming to give them Cause to suspect He designed any ill to the Church or them: Who, said they, to some of the *Hereditaay Men*, gave him greater Encomiums at his first coming than you? Who extolled his Virtue, His Wisdom and Good Qualities more than you? And no doubt would have continued it, had He given you the same Reins you had, to have

Go-

Govern'd and Acted without Comptroll. Had he made you Lords and Masters of all the Mannour, to have Revelled the Forests, destroyed the Game, ransacked the Woods, and enriched your selves at the expence of the honest Tenants and Freeholders.

But to be short, after all the Endeavours of the *Parish* Boy's Friends, a Court was chose of such honest and substantial Men, as gave Hopes of retrieving the Credit and Interest of the Mannour, and of setting all Things to rights again; for the Trade of the Town was greatly fallen off, and the principal part call'd the *Cloath Fair*, was almost wholly ruined, the *Hereditary Tribe*, during the Time they had the Management of the Mannour, had transferred the greatest part of it to other Places; so that the Poor encreased, and lay Starving for want of Employment; and many, whose Business depended on it, were fain to abandon their Country: It was time to exclaim against *George's* Right and Management, when they found he design'd to call them strictly to Account for all these Things; yet they vaunted, as tho' they feared neither Man nor Devil; and talk'd as loudly of their Innocence as the most excusable.

At the first sitting of the Court they appeared then with all the assurance possible,



ble, even with such Confidence as seem'd to convince People they were indeed Innocent, and little was expected but that they should mend their Manners for the future: But this appeared to be only outward shew, for no sooner did the Court fall upon the State of the Mannour, but their Hearts failed them; and Conscious of their Guilt, flew some one way, some another, not daring to abide the Test of what they had done.

What Confusion appeared in the Faces of the Party is easily imagined; but the Effect it wrought was more wonderful: The People who had before been deluded, began to recover of their Stupidity, and by a Rule, always in esteem among the Vulgar, judged they were Guilty because they flew from Justice; and from this Application, fell into much better Sentiments of their Landlord *George*; whom they now began to Esteem, finding that all which had been said against him was meer Malice and Prejudice. They now approached him without Fear, and found, instead of the frightful Ideas given of him, that he was meer Flesh and Blood, and at length proclaimed him one of the honestest Fellows breathing, venting their Curses now on none but his Enemies.

How



How He Govern'd the Mannour many Years to their great Advantage, and became the Darling of the Country: Likewise the Great Honour he won in several Tournaments, and how he suppressed his Enemies, will be the Subject of a Second Part.

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